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# Exploring the views on total quality human resources management between public and private educational units

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**Abstract:** *The aim of the present study is to identify the attitudes of the directors of different types of educational units regarding the practices of Total Quality of Human Resources Management (TQHRM) in Greece. The specific objectives of the survey are the exploration and analysis of the following issues: a) The philosophy applied by each director on the unit they manage and the position of the HR in it; b) the directors' opinion about the TQHRM Practices; and c) the difference in the approach of these practices between the public and private educational unit directors. The data is collected using a questionnaire that was sent electronically to Greek schools of various levels in 2018 and the number of responses is 70, of which 53% are from the private and 47% from the public sector directors. To process responses and draw conclusions, both one-dimensional and multidimensional analysis were performed. The results of this survey show that the HRM practices followed by the directors do not have a clear orientation. This highlights the need for training those who run an educational institution on TQHRM and the understanding of the importance of Human Resources on achieving the goals of an organization.*

**Keywords:** *Total Quality Management (TQM), Human Resources Management (HRM), educational units, strategic procedures, quality processes.*

**JEL Classification:** *I21, I29*

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

TQM is a new managerial approach that aims to maximize customer satisfaction through ongoing improvement of all functions and processes of a business (Kapiki, 2012; Hafeez et al., 2006). According to the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM), Total Quality Management (TQM) stands for all the ways in which an organization or a business responds to the needs and expectations of consumers, staff, economic stakeholders and the surrounding society, in general (Geraedts, Montenarie & van Rijk, 2001). As reported by the Global Quality Forum, TQM is a human-centered management system that aims at ongoing consumer

satisfaction with the lowest possible real costs (Bounds, Yorks, Adams & Ranney, 1994). For the US Federal Budget Management Agency, TQM is a "comprehensive organizational approach to meeting customer needs and expectations, including all senior executives and employees, using quantitative methods to continually improve the processes, products and services of the organization" (Milakovich, 1990).

For Oakland (1994) TQM is the ongoing effort to improve the competitiveness, efficiency and structure of a business or organization. In the same line, Dale (1999) argued that TQM is the co-operation of various business processes and all participants in an organization or business in terms of reciprocity to produce products and services that meet the

needs and demands of consumers or even to exceed them. Laffel and Blumenthal (1989) focused on the involvement of all members of the business or organization in the effort to pursue quality within TQM, considering that this effort should focus on meeting the needs and requirements of the customer.

Mele and Colurcio (2006) described TQM as a global approach to the issue of corporate and organization-based governance through continuous improvement of processes, based on the involvement of all staff, while its aim is to meet the demands of not only consumers but also those who have legitimate interests from the business or the organization.

There are strongly conflicting views on the nature of employee participation and involvement in all organization processes as promoted by TQM. For Delbridge et al. (1992); Parker and Slaughter (1993); and McArdle et al. (1995), the involvement of employees in decision-making is limited and makes little difference, at least in terms of lower-level officials. Parker & Slaughter argue that authority and power are moving to the upper levels while responsibility is shifting to the lowest. Sewell & Wilkinson (1992a) believe that TQM reinforces administrative supervision and control of lower officials. Others, trying to find a middle way, point to greater involvement in a predetermined by the administration agenda. The common position, however, is that if control management systems do not change, participation has very few benefits for employees and the organization as a whole (Hill & Wilkinson, 1995).

Although TQM was originally designed as a tool to improve the quality of products and services provided by businesses, many educators and scholars have suggested that it can be applied on education as well (Pourrajab et al., 2011). Some of them believed that TQM would make a decisive contribution to shaping appropriate frameworks so that educational reformation becomes necessary (Mehrotra, 2004). They also advocated the perception that its implementation would reduce the waste of useful school resources and increase productivity (Pourrajab et al., 2011). As mentioned by Brinia (2008), TQM in education aims to meet the needs of students, to continuously improve the teaching process, to empower students and encourage them to take responsibility in the teaching process, to promote teamwork and the participation of all aiming at the proper operation of the school.

According to Engelkemeyer (1999), TQM can address a number of disadvantages of the education system. He focused his attention on the field of higher education and argued that TQM could cope with the lack of teaching methods, the presence of curricula that did not meet the requirements and the needs of their synchrony, the high costs and the malfunctioning of the administrative services.

On this basis, Bolton (1995) observed some points of convergence of TQM principles with the values and needs of universities. Thus, the emphasis of TQM on human resources coincides with the anthropocentric character of higher education. TQM focuses on the correspondence of consumer requirements and needs with the attributes of products, just as higher education tries to adapt to the requirements of students. Moreover, TQM in addition to the product scope also covers the scope of services, such as the provision of

training services. Finally, the implementation of TQM in tertiary education can help reduce its operating costs.

The debate on improving quality in education has begun in Europe since the 1970s, and a number of international organizations and institutions such as the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and UNESCO have taken part in it, with questions to be focused on what constitutes a "good school" and "good education" (Christou & Sigala, 2002, 2003; Mancera & Schmelkes, 2010; Hanushek & Wößmann, 2007). As Neave (1988) has noticed, education itself has lost some of its social character and is gradually integrated in the field of economic policy. Thus, education is presented as a national project, but its new target borrows its terminology from the field of the economy, which proves its origin to be of an industrial nature and is not based on a social and collective model.

From the above, the importance of the human resources, as well as of the wider school environment in the implementation of TQM becomes clear. Thus, it is natural for traditional HRM practices not to be in tune with the advent of the TQM and to be in need for revision, as, not only employees' roles, but also those of the heads (the directors in the case of education) change in the light of the TQM (Cardy & Dobbins, 1996; Valachis et al., 2008). Several surveys have shown that the implementation of Total Quality HRM brings in positive results to employees' perception of their work, increasing their satisfaction and loyalty (Boselie & van der Wiele, 2002; Karia & Asaari, 2006), thus leading to improvement of services.

However, the implementation of Total Quality HRM in the school environment is, in particular, a subject of research for which there is insufficient literature, although the benefits of Total Quality HRM in corporate environments have been studied extensively during the last decades. In the present study, an attempt is made to clarify through the literature, the strategic points of Total Quality HRM first, and then, more specifically, those of Total Quality HRM in education.

In this context, a survey was carried out in order to outline the directors' views of and the HRM practices used in contemporary Greek education. Aiming at a deeper understanding of these attitudes, a comparison was made between the responses of the directors of public education units and those of the private sector directors. This is a quantitative survey with qualitative variables, and the data is collected using a questionnaire, which consists of 23 questions answered on a four-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was sent electronically to schools of various levels in Greece, including private coaching schools and vocational training institutes.

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## 2 METHODOLOGY

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The purpose of the present study is to identify the attitude of the directors of different types of educational units regarding the practices of the Total Quality HRM in Greece in 2018. To reach our purpose, an attempt is made to decode the objectives and the overall management philosophy of each unit towards its customers, both internal and external.

The specific objectives of the survey are the exploration and analysis of the following issues: a) The managerial

philosophy applied by each director on the unit they manage and the role the Human Resources play in it. In order for this to be achieved, we tried to identify the practices that are used for the accomplishment of the basic and common functions for private and public educational units b) the directors' opinion and approach on the Total Quality HRM Practices and the differences these opinions might have regarding these practices between public and private educational unit directors, by exploring their views on how and if they apply Total Quality HRM, given the fact that public school directors are not the decision-makers. Therefore, a comparison of the basic practices followed by private and public entities was then made, in an attempt to draw conclusions about the differences in the implementation of Total Quality HRM in centralized and decentralized managed environments.

This study carried out a primary survey since new data were collected through research, which was designed and conducted solely on the basis of the research questions mentioned above, given that secondary research did not result in publications with the same objectives. The research adopts a quantitative methodology since it aims at the collection of numerical data that will give a quantitative view of the attitudes maintained by the directors of the respective educational units and the practices they follow. It is important to take into account the nature of the variables measured. The term "variable" refers to a characteristic or attribute that may take on different values (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). Although the variables will yield quantitative data through the questionnaire, which is the tool of this survey, most of the variables are qualitative as they refer to views and attitudes that are not numerical.

For the present survey, an electronic questionnaire was used through which the participants were asked to answer on a Likert scale whether they agreed or disagreed with the queries. The questionnaire consists of 23 questions, 19 of which can be answered on a scale from 1: "I strongly agree" to 4: "I strongly disagree". The four points are considered more appropriate for young respondents and those with low motivation to complete a questionnaire, as comparable scales are easy to understand and require less effort to respond. The reason for choosing the four-point scale was to avoid neutrality, which participants often turn to in order to avoid an extreme response. However, this can lead to the inability to capture the attitudes and opinions of the respondent and to influence the reliability of conclusions and results (Nemoto & Beglar, 2013). A major advantage an electronic questionnaire has is that it collects data automatically in an electronic spreadsheet which facilitates its analysis and processing.

For this particular research, the population is considered to be the total of public and private nursery, primary and secondary schools in Greece, as well as all the private language schools, private educational centers and the secondary education coaching schools (frontistirio), since these are considered the most prominent kinds of educational units in Greece and are the most likely to employ the largest numbers of teaching staff.

It is often assumed that the more questionnaires completed, the better for the research. However, as reported by Rugg & Petre (2007), questionnaires should be as many as needed,

since, beyond a certain point, only time and resources will be wasted. The most important objective is to reduce diminishing returns. A random selection process from a sampling frame, which as the number of questionnaires grows will yield more and more repetitive results, can significantly reduce the diminishing returns. According to Zafiroopoulos (2015), the population surveyed by a researcher of social sciences is, or is considered, infinite. Therefore, although the sample to be collected will be a specific percentage of the population, whatever its size, it is valuable and can be used to generate representative statistics.

A sampling frame is defined as a list of (almost) the entire research population and may not always be available. However, in order to apply random and systematic sampling, the sampling frame is necessary (Zafiroopoulos, 2015). Different sampling frames for each type and level of an educational unit were used in the present study, in an attempt for our sampling method to be as random as possible. More specifically, for primary and secondary public education, respectively, the first two results of the web search of regional educational administrations in Greece were selected and questionnaires were sent electronically, to all the official e-mail addresses of the schools in each regional administration's database. Specifically, questionnaires were sent via e-mail to all registered schools of Primary Education of the Prefecture of Evia and Rodopi and those of the Secondary Education of Drama and Chania. The Municipal Nurseries of the Municipalities of Pella and Rhodes were chosen to be sent questionnaires to the same way. Regarding the private coaching schools, a random selection of Municipalities was made from the interactive map existing on the Federation of Educational Coaches of Greece's webpage and questionnaires were again sent to the entire list of each Municipality, namely, the Municipality of Kilkis, Imathia, Arta, and Ilia. Concerning the Private Educational Centers, each third entry was randomly selected from the e-mail list of the Yellow Pages' webpage. To collect data from the directors of Foreign Language Centers (FLC), the questionnaire was posted after consultation with the management, in a closed pan-Hellenic online group of FLC owners. Finally, the questionnaire was sent through the ATEI's Master program on the Organization and Management of Educational Units administration to all the attending directors. Unfortunately, cooperation with the Hellenic Private Schools Association did not proceed and no data were collected from primary and secondary private schools in Greece, as no questionnaires were answered from those sent individually.

To process, analyze and display data the Microsoft Office "suite" was used. Responses were gathered from "Google Forms" and transferred to a Microsoft Excel file. A tab for each question was created. Each of these tabs contains the answers, the frequency, and relative frequency table, and the chart used. In quantitative variables, their location and dispersion measures were also calculated with the help of the Microsoft Excel average, standard deviation (stdev) and skew functions. As a first step for the data analysis the average, the median and the dispersion values of the population were calculated, as well as the coefficient of variation and skewness. Secondly, a multi-dimensional descriptive statistic analysis took place. Two queries of interest were chosen each

time (for example the type of the educational unit and their main goal being the customers' satisfaction) and a contingency table was formed. After calculating the common distribution, we were able to draw our conclusions.

### 3 RESULTS - DISCUSSION

#### 1. One-dimensional descriptive statistics

This section details the descriptors of the variables used in this analysis. Data were collected after questionnaires were filled in by the directors of educational institutions. The number of questionnaires is 70, each containing 23 questions and they are fully completed, that is, there are 70 values for each of the 23 research variables. The first four questions refer to some demographics of the sample, while the rest are calibrated questions in the scale of 1: "I strongly agree" to 4: "I strongly disagree". Below are summarized the three most important variables of primary research which are all qualitative.

A) In the qualitative variable type of educational unit, the bulk of the sample is concentrated in 4 large groups out of the 6 variables, which account for 93% of the responses, and are: "Private Coaching School", "Public Primary Education School", "Public Secondary Education School" and "Foreign Languages Centre".

B) With regard to the variable clarification of the objectives, practices and their implementation, concerning the organization and work planning of the educational units: 98.5% of the respondents have as their primary target the provision of quality services, versus 85.7% who have the positive educational outcomes and 77.1% who have the customer satisfaction. In addition, 95.7% of the directors put emphasis on prevention of problems that are likely to arise in the unit rather than addressing them, and 78.6% consider their role as coordinating and facilitating. In 70% of the units, staff members are involved in the decision-making process. In relation to the involvement of clients (parents, students, etc.) in setting qualitative goals, the directors' views are divided (56% agree while 44% disagree). These results portray the general approach educational directors in Greece have towards their units' goals. The fact that customer satisfaction is appreciated less than the results, along with them being a bit more reluctant to involve the wider environment in planning procedures, shows that they do not fully apply TQM practices, although they perceive their role to be in accordance with them.

C) Respecting the variable strategic procedures in the TQM of human resources, the results show that: important criteria for selection and recruitment, according to the replies of the directors, are the following: qualitative features such as teamwork, problem-solving and initiative (97, 2%), work experience and qualifications (75%), which is a positive outcome according to TQM. In the question of whether during the selection process, those who will work with the candidates should have a say, 51.4% of the sample appear negative, something that could have a negative impact on teamwork in the future. To evaluate the performance of teaching staff, 91% of the sample responded that the main criteria are their work and educational methods. In the question whether the staff assessment should involve the clients (parents, students) and the colleagues, a fairly high

percentage of directors (50%) replied that they did not consider it necessary, a fact that could again suggest reluctance in involving the wider environment. The results for employees' rewards are as follows: 81% of the sample perceives individual rewards as more effective, a possible impediment to teamwork, while 69% disagrees that the most effective reward is of monetary nature. In the question of whether the collaboration, the initiative and the innovative approach of the employees' problems should be rewarded, 94% of the directors responded positively. With regard to staff development, the results show that training is being carried out on the following issues: a) future developments aimed at quality education (81.5%), b) improving decision-making, problem-solving and collaboration skills (57%), and c) developing a quality-oriented corporate culture (57.1%). The difference of the percentages regarding the kind of training being carried out could indicate, once again, the emphasis given on the results, rather than the qualitative skills and culture.

#### 2. Multidimensional descriptive statistics

In the second part of the statistical analysis, an attempt was made to compare the attitudes and views of the directors of the public educational units with those of the directors of private units. In this section, we present a series of correlations between the most important variables of this analysis. Specifically, some information is given about the contingency tables, with which the two-dimensional analysis is performed, and then the correlations of the variables selected as the most important ones are presented analytically.

A contingency table is a frequency table that can be created if we simultaneously rank individuals, cases or data based on the values of two qualitative variables. The contingency table is the table formed by two qualitative categories. The number of columns in the table is equal to the number of classes of the first variable and its number of lines is equal to the number of classes of the second variable (Vogt, 2007). The format of the contingency table is as follows:

Table 1: Contingency table

| Variable 1 | Variable 2 |          |          |     |          |
|------------|------------|----------|----------|-----|----------|
|            | Class 1    | Class 2  | Class 3  | ... | Class s  |
| Class 1    | $O_{11}$   | $O_{12}$ | $O_{13}$ | ... | $O_{1s}$ |
| Class 2    | $O_{21}$   | $O_{22}$ | $O_{23}$ | ... | $O_{2s}$ |
| Class 3    | $O_{31}$   | $O_{32}$ | $O_{33}$ | ... | $O_{3s}$ |
| ...        | ...        | ...      | ...      | ... | ...      |
| Class r    | $O_{r1}$   | $O_{r2}$ | $O_{r3}$ | ... | $O_{rs}$ |

Where element  $O_{32}$  is the observed value for class 3 of variable 1 and class 2 of variable 2.

Contingency tables of the selected variables

Table 2 below shows the contingency of the variables "Type of educational unit" and "The main goal is customer satisfaction (parents, students)".

Table 2: Type of educational unit / The main goal is customer satisfaction (parents, students)

|                          |                                   |                    | Responses        |       |          |                     | Total |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|-------|----------|---------------------|-------|
|                          |                                   |                    | I strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | I strongly disagree |       |
| Type of educational unit | Public Primary Education School   | Number             | 2                | 8     | 3        | 0                   | 13    |
|                          |                                   | Relative frequency | 7%               | 32%   | 21%      | 0%                  | 19%   |
|                          | Public Secondary Education School | Number             | 4                | 7     | 7        | 0                   | 18    |
|                          |                                   | Relative frequency | 14%              | 28%   | 50%      | 0%                  | 26%   |
|                          | Public Preschool Education        | Number             | 2                | 0     | 1        | 0                   | 3     |
|                          |                                   | Relative frequency | 7%               | 0%    | 7%       | 0%                  | 4%    |
|                          | Private Educational Center        | Number             | 2                | 0     | 0        | 0                   | 2     |
|                          |                                   | Relative frequency | 7%               | 0%    | 0%       | 0%                  | 3%    |
|                          | Foreign Language Center           | Number             | 13               | 8     | 1        | 1                   | 23    |
|                          |                                   | Relative frequency | 45%              | 32%   | 7%       | 50%                 | 33%   |
|                          | Private Coaching School           | Number             | 6                | 2     | 2        | 1                   | 11    |
|                          |                                   | Relative frequency | 21%              | 8%    | 14%      | 50%                 | 16%   |
| Total                    |                                   | Number             | 29               | 25    | 14       | 2                   | 70    |
|                          |                                   | Relative frequency | 100%             | 100%  | 100%     | 100%                | 100%  |

Table 2 shows a great heterogeneity as we see that foreign language centers put more emphasis on customer satisfaction (with 45% responding I strongly agree), while the lowest is given by public schools of secondary education (with 50% responding I disagree). For this reason, it is considered necessary to distinguish between private educational institutions and public educational institutions and also to compare them (Table 3):

It is interesting to note that 72% of the answers "I strongly agree that the main objective is customer satisfaction" are collected by private educational institutions, while 79% of the answers "I disagree" belong to the class "public educational institution" (Table 2). Customer satisfaction came third in the hierarchy of goals for all responses, which, as mentioned above, is in contradiction with TQM, which considers customer satisfaction to be the primary objective of each organization. The answers to this question are of great

interest, as the views of the public unit directors differ from those of the private educational units. One could assume that the fact that private centers are directly funded by their clients creates a stronger sense of responsibility on the director's behalf. In addition, another factor that could be taken into consideration is the lack of competition for public schools, but this again does not justify such a high rate which seems to disagree with the uplifting of customer satisfaction to a key goal of the organization. There are therefore questions about how public unit directors are facing parents and students, as they seem not to be an important part of the objectives of their educational unit, and perhaps reinforce the above assumption that they focus mainly on formal procedures of tasks accomplishment (Oakland, 2014).

Table 3: Type of educational unit / The main goal is customer satisfaction (parents, students)

|                          |                               |                    | Responses        |       |          |                     | Total |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|-------|----------|---------------------|-------|
|                          |                               |                    | I strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | I strongly disagree |       |
| Type of educational unit | Public Education Institution  | Number             | 8                | 15    | 11       | 0                   | 34    |
|                          |                               | Relative frequency | 28%              | 60%   | 79%      | 0%                  | 49%   |
|                          | Private Education Institution | Number             | 21               | 10    | 3        | 2                   | 36    |
|                          |                               | Relative frequency | 72%              | 40%   | 21%      | 100%                | 51%   |
|                          | Total                         | Number             | 29               | 25    | 14       | 2                   | 70    |
|                          |                               | Relative frequency | 100%             | 100%  | 100%     | 100%                | 100%  |

educational unit and nine selected variables, and by creating the contingency tables in the same way as above, the results are as follows:

1) The main objective is positive educational outcomes (e.g. success in exams). There is again an emphasis on the outcome, i.e. the success in the private sector exams, as 74% of the respondents who strongly agree belong in that sector. At the same time, all those who responded that they disagree belong to the public sector. In the other two answers, "I agree" and "I strongly disagree" the results are divided. This is observed in the separation between the private and the public sector, whilst if the partition was based on the level of education, the results are homogeneous. Numerically, most public sector directors replied that they agree, however, 100% of the "I disagree" answers came from the public sector. On the contrary, all (but one) responses from private sector directors were positive, and 74% of the answers "I strongly agree" came from them. Therefore, a general agreement on the objectives of private institutions is observed, which is not the case with public institutions. The lack of competition among public institutions is likely to play a role, as it is reasonable for private centers to target both

customer satisfaction and positive student outcomes in order to increase their clientele (De Jager & Nieuwenhuis, 2005).

2) The main criterion for selecting employees should be (past) work experience and qualifications. Formal qualifications (such as work experience) seem to be valued more by private unit directors, as the number of responses is consistent with this statement. The directors of the public institutions who disagreed, account for 72% of the "I disagree" answers, although they were fewer than those who agreed (13 vs. 21).

3) A key criterion for selecting employees should be quality features such as teamwork, problem-solving, and initiative. The qualitative characteristics of the candidates seem to be appreciated more by the directors of the public sector, who accounted for 75% of the "I strongly agree" answers, compared to the 66% of the private sector directors who just answered, "I agree". A tendency towards qualitative characteristics emerges from public sector directors, and this is probably due to the fact that the selection process in the centralized education system that all the Greek public schools belong to is made purely on the basis of formal qualifications and perhaps these answers indicate the need for further research to improve staff selection in public education.

4) I consider individual rewards more effective (for evaluating and rewarding staff). Once again, there is a consensus among private sector directors and a divergence of opinions among public sector directors, as 92% of the people who disagreed come from the public sector. From the rates of responses, it seems that the private sector is not familiar with teamwork, which is not in line with TQM principles, since TQM considers individual rewards to be detrimental towards the collaboration and team spirit that its organizations ought to adopt (Crawford & Shatler, 1999).

5) Monetary reward is the most effective reward. There is an absolute balance and a common perception of reward. The percentages of all responses are in relative equilibrium. The majority is inclined to the view that monetary reward is not the most effective reward, which is also supported by TQM theory. The directors of educational units of all types seem to have the same view.

6) Staff is actively involved in decision-making. The staff has rather little involvement in private sector decision-making, as most private-sector directors have responded negatively. On the contrary, it seems that in the public sector the directors are more democratic, as only two of them disagreed. It could be assumed, then, that public-sector directors have a more cooperative approach to staff, probably because they themselves have been employees in the past, while private sector directors adopt a more centralized approach perhaps because they are often the owners of the business and believe they know their interests better.

7) The selection process should also involve those who will work with the candidate. The formation of a view on this practice is difficult, as both the private and public sector appear divided, with the private one leaning towards a positive view. The latter is an encouraging sign, as the TQM favors the involvement of associates in the selection process, an approach that will lead towards better teamwork.

8) In setting qualitative goals the wider environment (parents, students, etc.) is also involved.

The views between the two types of educational units on the involvement of clients in the setting of objectives appear to be opposite, with private ones being rather negative to this practice, while public units seem rather positive. The extroversion of an organization is an important part of the TQM as it allows management to directly listen to and respond better to customer needs. While customer satisfaction is of particular importance to private units, it does not appear to be approached with the directness proposed by TQM techniques, and this may be due to the same reasons for non-involvement of employees in decision-making. Moreover, public school is a stronger part of society, since it is not a private enterprise and comes more often into contact with its wider environment, e.g. in celebrations, which may create a better relationship with it.

9) The customers (parents, students) and colleagues should be involved in staff assessment. The position of private sector directors on the involvement of clients (internal and external) in the staff assessment, appears to be rather positive, an attitude which is in line with the TQM. However, in the public sector, their attitude is rather negative, which raises questions as the prevailing evaluation system is considered insufficient and the implementation of TQM in this procedure may seem more complicated, but it gives a more integrated view and can lead to more concrete and effective improvements.

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#### 4 CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

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The purpose of this research was to investigate the attitudes of directors of different types of educational units towards Total Quality HRM. With a view to clarifying these attitudes, a comparison was made between the responses of directors who run private educational units and those of the public units. On average, those who answered the questionnaire have been in administration for 10.7 years and their average age is 46.4 years.

The methodology chosen for this research in order to quantitatively depict the results of its objectives, helped to obtain a first glance to whether TQHRM is applied in Greek educational units. questionnaires have the ability to collect information on subjective characteristics in a standardized form and thus becomes a valuable tool for feedback (Rugg & Petre, 2007). The close-ended questions used, though, could be considered limitative and might simplify complex issues. The results of the one-dimensional analysis are sometimes in line with the practices advocated by Total Quality HRM and sometimes not. More specifically, the philosophy that rules the majority of respondents seems (from the objectives, the subjects of education and the assessment) to be result oriented, a view that does not promote Total Quality. Individual rewards seem to be preferred, a practice widespread in traditional HRM (Runhaar, 2016), but they do not promote teamwork, and so one might assume that teamwork is not given the necessary attention according to TQM. The fact that questions concerning the involvement of clients in various management functions have found a large percentage of directors to be opposed to it, raises queries as to whether they actually face their role as merely facilitating and whether they are ready to implement the practices of Total Quality HRM, which encourages the empowerment of

those involved. The private or public nature of the educational institution, although in several cases it may justify the attitude of the directors, does not appear to affect the application of Total Quality HRM on the educational units in a specific way, since in most cases the distribution of responses was relatively homogeneous.

The results of this survey show that the HRM practices followed by the directors do not have a clear orientation. This research is one of the very few attempts to portray the reality in Greek educational HRM especially through the TQM prism, and the fact that qualitative goals and orientation are considered of secondary importance could imply a traditional business approach towards education in present day Greece. This highlights the need for training those who run an educational institution on Total Quality HRM and the understanding of the importance of Human Resources for achieving an organization's goals (Smith, 2013).

It would be very interesting to investigate further the HRM practices in Greece, regarding the directors' view of their role, their perception of the staff's role and to look further at the reasons leading directors to be reluctant to engage internal and external clients in management functions. The fact that public education is highly decentralized could also be taken into account while exploring the above in greater depth. Finally, the literature on HRM in education is sufficient, as is adequate for the TQM in education, yet there is not enough material for Total Quality HRM in education, especially when it comes to Greece, therefore any research in this field would be an important contribution.

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